

The Cheesecake Factor

8 August 2008

By Maja Frigelj, Staff Writer

When the Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) blood collection team at National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD announces a blood drive at the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C., that doesn't only mean that blood will be collected- it means that plenty of cheesecake will be provided to those who donate. A signature snack, this cheesecake incentive has mustered regular blood donors since its inception.

One of those donors is Master Chief Musician Stuart McLean, Navy Band Career Counselor. Although Master Chief McLean is a fan of the dessert, that part of donating blood at the Navy Yard is only the icing on the (cheese)cake.

"When I was four years old my father became ill and would have died if he hadn't received blood transfusions," explains Master Chief McLean and continues, "Thankfully he lived another 40 years after he recovered; if it weren't for those generous donors who donated for my father, I may have not had a dad growing up."

Inspired by his father's recovery and the selfless deeds of strangers who donated in his father's honor, Chief Master McLean celebrates over 22 years of regular blood donations. "I am probably preaching to the choir, but we have a lot of military folks in dangerous places, so I think it's everyone's duty here, living comfortably and safely, to give blood and help them."

Regardless of what your inspiration is, regardless of why you want to help others, the importance lies in the simple act of donating blood. The ASBP is the military's official blood collection program and is dedicated to providing a safe and steady blood supply for our women and men in uniform and their families worldwide.

Although not every ASBP blood donor center serves cheesecake to their donors, what could be sweeter than saving a life? By taking one hour out of your day, as often as every 56 days, you can save up to three lives each time you donate blood. To schedule your next donation appointment at a blood donor center near you, visit www.militaryblood.dod.mil and click on the *Give Blood Now* button.